



Cultural Action Plan  
Steering Committee Meeting  
September 8, 2008

On September 8, 2008, the Cultural Action Plan Steering Committee met in the Council Chamber at 217 South Main Street to review the final draft of the Cultural Action Plan and offer consultant Mary Berryman Agard comments via a conference call. Lunch was provided.

**In attendance were:** Mayor Susan Kluttz, Councilman Mark Lewis, Joe Morris (Staff Liaison), Connie Baker, Phillip Burgess, Michele d'Hemecourt, James Donaldson, Paul Fisher, Cheryl Goins, Sarah Hall, Elaney Hasselman, Sarah Hensley, Rose Meeks Jones, Ruth Chaparro Kennerly, James Meacham, Diana Moghrabi, Edward Norvell, Doug Paris, Barbara Perry, Eleanor Qadirah, Lynn Raker, Mark Ritchie, David Setzer, Marietta Smith, and Gail Elder White.

**Guest:** Anne Cave of the Rowan Arts Council

**Mayor Kluttz** called the meeting to order at 12:15 and thanked the committee members for their contribution in making this a successful process. The large turnout proved the enthusiasm and interest in this plan. Joe Morris dialed Mary Berryman Agard and she participated on speakerphone.

Mary did the analysis of the community and submitted her recommendations. The draft plan is apportioned into three major components: background and information collected during Mary's visits to Salisbury, discussion and recommendations about the different elements that were brought to her attention, and goals/strategies. The committee commented using page and line numbers.

Mary said she found this a particularly fun and challenging plan to write because there was such depth of opinion and so many possibilities within Salisbury.

Marietta Smith represented the Rowan Arts Council (RAC) in their request to insert that their mission statement is intentionally *in flux* until this process is complete. The wording may be "under continuing development."

The RAC, which was formed 30 years ago, wishes to avoid duplication. The RAC hopes that forming a second organization such as Salisbury's Cultural Commission would not bring a competitive or adversarial situation--especially between the City and the County. Good communication between the two groups would be of utmost importance. (RAC is recertified every three years and have just been recertified as a *county* arts organization.)

Mary stated that the RAC would not have representation on Salisbury's Cultural Commission due to conflict of interest. This plan tries to address the issue of coordination through that idea of mayoral appointees on the RAC Board as liaisons.

On the state level, they simply add a name to the mailing list and let things be worked out on the local level. At the local level, there has to be a constant, mindful look at how roles can complement one another rather than compete with one another. It may be that, in the future, the two organizations (RAC and Cultural Commission) could merge. Admittedly, there is animosity between the City and

County leadership right now. There is no need, however, to hold up the City's willingness to move ahead with arts development to a question that is that global right now. Offering RAC assistance in securing good leadership would be real help at this time.

Marietta announced that the RAC has implemented an arts and education grant program. They will have a gala fundraising event at the end of the year.

Dr. Sarah Hensley noted that (page 32, line 1166) Rowan-Salisbury schools offer *limited* summer school. They offer summer programs in partnership with The ARC and Water Works Visual Arts Center. They are currently working in tandem with the City of Salisbury on a wall that will display tiles made by students. Mary will change wording to, "Because the public schools offer limited summer arts programming."

Lynn Raker called attention to page 33

**A. Create a municipal arts and cultural function.**

1203 1. The City of Salisbury should establish a permanent Cultural Commission and Office  
1204 of Arts and Culture. The Cultural Commission should be structured as a subcommittee  
1205 of the Community Appearance Commission, appointed by the Council and charged  
1206 with ongoing cultural planning and plan implementation, establishing policy for the  
1207 Office of Arts and Culture, the development of culturally related programs and services  
1208 including services for individual artists, an expanded public art program, and a  
1209 municipal arts and cultural funding system. The Cultural Commission should replace  
1210 the Downtown Public Art Committee, building on and expanding the work of that  
1211 group.

Lynn Raker, Liaison to the Community Appearance Commission (CAC) and the Downtown Public Art Committee, is in agreement with the CAC Chair, Barbara Perry, and Edward Norvell, a member of the Downtown Art Committee, that the Cultural Commission should be a commission that stands on its own. The Downtown Public Art Committee has worked very hard and has done a very good job; however, it is effective in only the visual arts. The Cultural Commission would be much broader than just visual art. They could appoint subcommittees on a project-by-project basis.

Mary will change the language on line 1205: "The Cultural Commission should be structured as an independent commission of the City Council." Mary suggested adding a specific recommendation that says, "The Cultural Commission will establish its public art function based on discussions and considerations undertaken with the Downtown Public Art Committee." Mary will work on something that will not disrupt the work of the committee. Lynn would like to see something that continues to hold the integrity of the Public Art Committee as a subcommittee of the Cultural Commission. It takes all the people they have working on the committee to make the project successful. History and art are both represented. Mary concluded that we are talking about developing a subcommittee relationship that is functional, that captures the current resources, that doesn't disrupt the current work, but also provides for the expansion and responsibility called for in the plan. There was a consensus on that statement.

Joe acknowledged that agility is needed as we transition into something that we have never done. We will have to make the best use of resources that are currently available to us with some uncertainty

about what resources will be available to us. There may be a period where we are feeling our way through to get to the ultimate goal of having the Cultural Commission.

Gail Elder White called attention to line 972 on page 26 regarding recreation open space

*For example, the city may wish*

972 to consider this need in the public dialog surrounding a potential “adequate public facility  
973 ordinance,” in its negotiations with residential developers, and in the design of green spaces  
974 developed via fees in lieu of recreation and open space.

The Land Development Ordinance has a component that is tied to density of residential development. This would be slightly different and should be left in as a point of discussion in the event that we did have a Cultural Commission appointed. It might be something they could take up. Mark Lewis suggested that residential *and* commercial (line 973) development should be added. Add too, “other cultural amenities.”

Lynn Raker addressed page 15, line

479 Residents, city staff, and local elected officials interviewed as a part of this planning process  
480 also suggested a system of city earmarking funds for the arts. In this approach, the city  
481 would make a commitment, affirmed in its financial ordinances, to a one-cent addition to  
482 the local tax rate and dedicated to arts and cultural programming.

Although penny for the arts is a wonderful idea, there are always overriding demands on that penny that may or may not be there. Mary pointed the conversation to the budget segment of the plan and the creation of a dedicated revenue stream. Communities that have very stable, highly successful public participation in arts and cultural have dedicated revenue streams.

Mark Lewis said one of the main reasons for this Cultural Action Plan was to determine what public support should be given to cultural arts.

James Meacham observed that the desire for the Rowan County Convention and Visitors Bureau to assume a larger role in arts, culture, marketing, and issuing grants will largely hinge on two things (1) whether there is an increase in the occupancy tax rate (2) The Tourism Development Authority (TDA). Where future money will go depends on which government body takes on the burden of the occupancy tax. This plan should stimulate thought and not threaten. Mary will be happy to encourage a civil dialogue around the subject of a countywide study. A discussion about the structure of the TDA and County views followed.

(Note: See Salisbury City Council minutes of May 20, 2008 for more on the subject of Salisbury increasing occupancy tax. <http://www.salisburync.gov/council/2008/052008m.pdf> )

Paul Fisher said he would not want the energy of this group to dissipate because County Rowan County will/will not come along. Rowan County leadership is not as progressive as the City of Salisbury in these matters.

## GENERAL COMMENTS

There was an exchange of pleasant experiences regarding the Fisher Street improvements, night on the town, various venues and plan inclusions such as public restrooms. Some corrections to the document included the proper name of The Looking Glass Artist Collective, Rose Meeks Jones, and mention that Casa de Piedra is a company that is based in Madison that owns a resort in Mexico and donated a week's stay as the main prize of the raffle during *Salisbury's Got Talent*.

This plan puts a full time employee accountable for the goals that the commission and council set forth. Mark Lewis sees this as a good thing for City Council.

## NEXT STEPS

1. Get amended plan back from Mary Berryman Agard
2. Get affirmation from Cultural Action Plan Steering Committee
3. Schedule presentation for City Council
4. Participate in budget process and Council retreat

It was requested by the committee that the document be affirmed via email after the changes have been made and resubmitted. After a tally is completed, this plan will be scheduled for a presentation to City Council. Mark Lewis suggested that this committee's work should continue forward. The committee and all of its supporters should be present for the presentation to Council in the near future. Supporters should be present for public hearings about the budget preparation in May. There are significant priorities, but without strong support for this document, it could get washed away.

As a fundamental first step, Joe Morris will be presenting a proposed City Ordinance regarding street festivals in the public right-of-way at the September 16, 2008, City Council meeting. A memo was distributed at the meeting. Salisbury has not had organizational capacity to deal with festivals. The Cultural Action Plan does create some mechanisms for dealing with festivals and other arts activities.

Mayor Susan Kluttz thanked everyone and looks forward to hearing positive input from the public on this issue at public hearings. She adjourned the meeting at 1:39 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Diana Moghrabi  
Secretary